

- 249 The maguey plant, or agave, was important to household economy for its sap, which was fermented to make a kind of
- [273] beer. Not only was this pulque used both as a tipple and a ceremonial intoxicant, but it had an important nutritive effect as well in counterbalancing the lack of greens in the
- [283] Mexican diet. The plant itself had many other uses. Its fibers could be twisted into twine or rope and woven into containers or even clothing. The thorns were excellent needles
- [412] and had a more lugubrious use as instruments for mortifying the flesh in religious penances. The leaves as a whole sometimes were employed in constructing shelters or roofing huts.
- [342] Small wonder that the maguey and the corn plants were symbolized as goddesses and worshiped accordingly.
- [248] The Aztecs cultivated cotton in many varieties. Tobacco
- [276] they smoked for the most part in hollow reeds as a sort of cigarette. Late in their history they also used elbow-shaped
- 249 pipes, probably for some ceremonial purpose, much as our
- [314] modern Pueblos restrict pipe smoking to rain-inducing rituals. They consumed quantities of copal gum as incense during religious ceremonies and obtained rubber from Vera Cruz and the south, as well as from the dwarf guayule plant found in northern Mexico. The Aztecs, like us, found this
- [526] material indispensable to their culture, for balls in their ceremonial game, *tlachtli*, and as a gum to fix feathers and other adornments to costumes. Bitumen, which came from the oil seepages in Vera Cruz, had its function as an adhesive and as a body paint. In western Mexico the Indians prepared a
- [317] serviceable lacquer which they used to coat gourds and wooden trays. This incomplete list of plants and substances cultivated and exploited by the Aztecs and their neighbors gives an idea of our deep indebtedness to these past civiliza-
- [237]